

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING SESSION  
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HAZARD ASSESSMENT  
AUGUST 20, 2019**

**ITEM 6**

**SUBJECT**

ACHIEVING THE HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER IN CALIFORNIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE'S COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEMS

**DISCUSSION**

In 2016, the Board adopted a Human Right to Water Resolution making the human right to water, as defined in AB 685, a primary consideration and priority across all of the state and regional boards' programs (State Water Resources Control Board Resolution No. 2016-0010. ). As part of its efforts to achieve the human right to water, the Board also enlisted the expertise of the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), to develop a framework for evaluating the quality, accessibility, and affordability of the state's drinking water supply. The assessment of the state's community water systems—comprised of this written report and an associated web platform—is a first step toward tracking capacities, deficiencies, vulnerabilities, and changes across the state's community water systems and across the framework's three principal analytic components – water quality, accessibility, and affordability. OEHHA's work on behalf of the Board marks the first state-led effort to develop a conceptual framework and method for tracking the state's progress in achieving the Human Right to Water policy goals across the state's water systems.

OEHHA's assessment uniquely complements past and ongoing efforts, including those listed above, by offering information that the public and decision makers can view over time, at the statewide or system-level, across all three principal components of the State's human right to water. The assessment is designed to support state and local government agencies including the Board and regional boards, the Legislature, researchers, and community organizations in tracking progress in the delivery of the human right to water state-wide. The tool is also intended to demonstrate how the state of safe, accessible, and affordable water changes over time.

OEHHA intends to expand and refine the assessment over time as additional data on water quality, accessibility and affordability in California becomes available. For example, in future versions OEHHA will seek to include state small water systems, schools, private wells, and marginalized populations (e.g., people experiencing homelessness), as well as tribal water systems. Similarly, sanitation is a critical component of the human right to water that OEHHA will seek to include in future versions. As OEHHA adds additional systems and populations to its assessment, the data and metrics may support other agencies' implementation of programs and policies.

This draft report first presents an overview of the assessment framework. Next, it introduces each of the three components—water quality, water accessibility and water affordability—along with the indicators that comprise each component. Each section includes draft results for each indicator and component. The report then explains how the framework is set up and walks readers through a series of hypothetical cases with supporting visual information. The draft report also includes several appendices that describe additional data and indicators that could be added into future versions of the framework and provides details on various technical aspects of the methods.

#### **POLICY ISSUE**

None –Informational Item

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None –Informational Item

#### **REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT**

None –Informational Item

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

None –Informational Item